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TWO

SERMONS

Preach't on a Day of

Fasting & Humiliation,

Kept by the Protestant Dissenters in Dublin,
On the Sad Occasion of the Death of
Our Late

GRACIOUS QUEEN

The Former, by Mr. J. Boyse,
The Latter, by Mr. Nath. Weld.

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THE
PUBLISHER
To The
READER.

HAVING heard these Sermons Preach'd at a day of Fasting and Humiliation kept among the Protestant Dissenters in Dublin on the occasion of the Death of our late Excellent Queen, I have with much difficulty and importunity prevail'd with their Authors to let me have Copys of 'em for the Press, because I judge the Publication of 'em may tend to promote more of that good understanding and hearty affection among Protestants, which has long been the earnest desire of all good men. And this end I hope they will be serviceable to attain, by removing some of those common prejudices against Dissenters, which have so much contributed to alienate the minds of their Fellow-Protestants from 'em. For by these Discourses the Reader may easily observe,

1. That their Charity is so far from being confin'd to their own Party, that where-ever they see the Image of God (consisting in the Essentials of Faith & Holiness) stamp'd on others: so

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lesser Differences signify any thing to diminish their affectionate Esteem for 'em. And as that Image shone with the brightest rays in the late Queen (who, we all know, liv'd and dy'd in the Communion of the Establish'd Church) so it possess the Dissenters not only with perfect Charity towards her, but with that profound Esteem and Veneration for her Piety, which these Discourses so largely express.

2. That Dissenters come not behind their Fellow-Subjects for loyal Affection to their Sovereigns. For as their Principles, in reference to the subjection due to Magistrates, are exactly the same with those of the Establish'd Church (as will evidently appear to any that compare their Confession of Faith with the 39 Articles on this Head), so the other Protestants derive greater advantages from the present Government, yet none express a more grateful sense of the favour of an indulgent Prince, or a more dutiful Affection to him than they do. And this is so universal, that as none of 'em fail'd to contribute their utmost towards this Revolution, so none of 'em have been yet convicted of any stickling or plotting against the Government. 'Tis true indeed, they are not fond of that Passive Obedience without any reserve or legal limitation, which some have (tho very unreasonably) made the characteristick of the Establish'd Church; For those that did so, us'd it only to serve a Turn, and as quickly renounc'd it, when it run contrary to their interest. But Queen Elizabeth's assistance to the Scot's and Hollander's, and King Charles the First's to the French, as well as this Revolution plainly demonstrates, that the body of that Church are not for that Doctrine of the Assé (as the Earl of Warrington calls it) in it's boundless latitude, tho all good Protestants and good Subjects are for Passive Obedience in it's due and limited sense.

And to add no more.

3. That

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3. *That the Dissenters are so far from being prejudic'd against Monarchy (when cast into the excellent mould of our wise Constitution) as if it were inconsistent with the advancement of the true Interest of Religion, that they never expect to see the Church Crown'd with greater Prosperity and Glory than when Kings are her Nursing Fathers, and Queens her Nursing Mothers, and they know not of any more remarkable accomplishment of that Prediction, than what they have seen since this happy Revolution.*

And tho they think not Monarchy to be Jure Divino exclusive of other Forms of Government; yet they think since the Entail of the Royal Scepter on the Family of David, there was no King more expressly design'd by Heaven, or sett over a people by the M^t High, than his present Majesty is.

Since then the Establish'd Church and Dissenters fear the same God, honour the same King, and contribute to the support of the same Government, why may they not live in mutual Peace and Love? Nay, why may they not, tho some Differences about modes of Worship, and Church Government, oblige 'em to retain distinct Assemblies, yet regard each other as belonging to the same Commonwealth of Israel? And that these Discourses may be useful to promote such a truly Charitable and Christian temper, is my earnest wish, and only aim in their Publication.

D. Cumyng.

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There is no doubt that the

at that location, when what they have been told is

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Sermon I.

2 Chron. Ch. 35. The last Clause of the 24th, and the first of the 25th Verse.

V. 24. *And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.*

25. *And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah.*

Civil Custom has taught us to pay a grateful Respect to our deceased Princes by some external marks of our sorrow for their Death. And sure those Subjects were very unworthy of so eminent a Blessing as all good Princes are, who do not resent their Death as a publick Loss, and who pay no Tribute of their Sighs & Tears at their mournful Funerals. But yet there are some of 'em, whose Life has been so endear'd to their People by the great benefits they have deriv'd from their excellent Government, and the greater they have been rais'd to the hopes of; and whose death has been so embitter'd by frustrating those joyful hopes, and presenting a long train of dismal consequences to their view, that it may justly be expected the sorrows of their afflicted Subjects shou'd at such a time transcend the common bounds, and be as extraordinary as the sad occasion of 'em.

Such an eminently beloved Prince was this in my Text, whose unexpected Death attended with severall aggravating Circumstances of it, did overflow his whole Kingdom with an unusual Torrent of grief. For 'tis observable, that tho many pious and just Princes had sway'd the Jewish Scepter be-

fore, and doubtless their People had not been wanting to express their just esteem for 'em, by lamenting their decease, yet we read no more of 'em, than that *they died, and were buried in the Sepulchres of their Fathers.* And yet who can imagine, that so Religious and Valiant a King as *David*, so wise and prosperous a one as *Solomon*, nay, so illustrious Reformers as *Jehoshaphat* and *Hezekiah* shou'd not have many tears of their affectionate Subjects shed over their Graves. And yet we find this Remark only made on the death of good *Josiah*, that when he was brought wounded from the Field to *Jerusalem*, and died there, *All Judah and Jerusalem mourn'd for him.* And to recommend the Example the more, *Jeremiah* himself (that faithful Prophet) is here mention'd as the chief Mourner, and seems to have born the greatest share of the publick grief at the sorrowful Solemnity of laying him in *the Sepulchre of his Fathers.* There must sure then be something singular in this excellent Prince himself, or in the circumstances of his death, that occasion'd so remarkable a sorrow, of which there is so special notice taken here by the inspired Historian, nay, which we find elsewhere to have become proverbial, to express the greatest Transports of publick grief. (For hereto'tis probable those expressions allude; *And in that day shall be great Mourning in Jerusalem, as the Mourning of Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddon,* The former name importing, as some Expositors iudge, some small Town or Village, near the Valley of *Megiddon*; where this fatal Battel was fought). Nay, to so extraordinary a height was their sorrow carried; that 'twas not confin'd to that time or Age, but transmitted to future years by a publick Ordinance; As you read in the words following the Text.

Now if we look back on the short History of this Prince's Reign, we may observe many Circumstances that concurr'd to justify and heighten their grief. If we consider his Qualities, we shall find he was not inferior to any of his Predecessors

fors in those excellent ones that might endear him to his people, by rendering his Government a publick Blessing to 'em. I we observe the time of his death, 'twas in the flower of his Age, and when he was intent upon the prosecution of great designs for the publick good, and particularly that of advancing the happy Reformation of Religion he had begun. If we look forward to the consequences of his death, those also appear most dismal; his Death being the sad presage of all those Calamities hastning on that people, which the Prophets had foretold, and which were only suspended and delay'd during his life.

No wonder then that his Death fill'd 'em with so general Consternation, and dissolv'd 'em into a flood of Tears, when so many circumstances conspir'd to give it so doleful and so terrible an Aspect upon 'em.

From the words then we may deduce this subject of our present sorrowful meditations.

The Death of Excellent and Religious Princes; when they are cut off in the prime of their Age, and in the height of their publick usefulness, is a just ground for deep and general lamentation.

Now the Death of such Excellent and Religious Princes, when attended with these two aggravating Circumstances, will appear to be a just ground of deep and general lamentation. If we either consider it meerly as a publick Calamity and Affliction, Or if we consider it as a mark of the just displeasure of God against our Sins, and often a presage of destructive vengeance.

I. It will appear to be a just ground for deep and general lamentation, if we consider it meerly as a publick Calamity and Loss.

For publick Afflictions not only justify, but call for publick sorrow. Grace is not intended to extinguish, but to moderate and govern our natural passions. So that to be insensible

sible of publick Evils, and unaffected with 'em, is so far from being a Vertue, that 'tis rather sottish stupidity, than true patience and fortitude. The soft and tender disposition of an affectionate *Nehemiah*, (1 *Neh.v.* 3, 4.) is more becoming a Christian, than the unnatural indolence of a churlish *Stoic*.

Now the Death of Excellent and Religious Princes, is a publick *Calamity* and *Affliction*; both considered *abstractedly in it self*, and much more, as *aggravated by these Circumstances I have mention'd*.

First, 'Tis so, consider'd *abstractedly in it self*, and that both in respect of the Civil and the Religious Interests of a People.

I. *In respect of their Civil Interests.*

For what can more effectually contribute to the temporal prosperity of a people, than the excellent Endowments of their Rulers. A large and clear Judgment to discern, and a publick Spirit to pursue the real Interests of their People as their own, Inflexible Integrity in the administration of publick Justice tempered with Goodness and Clemency, unwearied diligence in their application to publick affairs, and a tender affectionate care for the welfare of their Subjects. These are such god-like Qualities, as render Princes the amiable Images of that Blessed Deity whose Vice-gerents they are, and consequently the *Darlings* and *Delights* of their happy Kingdoms. And indeed when under the prudent Conduct of wise Princes the publick Interests of their Kingdoms prosper and flourish, and they are secur'd from foreign Invasions, and domestick Broyls; When under the shadow of their Authority and Protection, their people dwell safely *every man under his own Vine and his Fig-tree, none making 'em afraid*; (1 *Kings* 4. v. 25.) When thro' their zeal for Justice, and accurate care for the equal distribution of it, *Judgment runs down* (to every part of their Dominions) *as Water, and Righteousness as a mighty stream*, *Amos* 5. v. 24. It's course being so impartial,

tial, as neither to be interrupted or perverted by Bribes, or by Favour. When their ears are open to all just Grievances, and the Cause of the Widows and Fatherless is as favourably heard, and their wrongs as speedily and effectually redress'd, as those of persons of the highest Rank and Quality. When instead of making their Government an unsupportable Yoke to their Subjects by grievous and illegal Taxes and Impositions, 'Tis rather their study to render it easy by a tender care of their Property & Liberties, and by taking off such heavy Burdens from 'em. When their lives are thus entirely sacrific'd to the good of their People, in unwearied toyls and care for their security and welfare; When 'tis their chief Ambition to be like the blessed God, the Protectors of oppressed Innocence, and publick Benefactors to mankind; Then *happy is the People that is in such a case, (Ps. 144 v. 5.)* And such a Prince is so extraordinary a Blessing, that *Nature* it self shou'd prompt all his Subjects to lament his death as an extreme Affliction, even as the loss of a *Common Parent*. And those never deserv'd the beneficial advantages of the happy Government of such Princes, whose hearts are no way touch'd with the deep wound their Death gives to the publick Interest of a Nation, which on the account thereof may justly say, *the Crown is fallen from our Head, (5 Lam. 16.)*

And this consideration no doubt had some influence on the sorrow mention'd in my Text for the death of King Josiah; For we read in the v. following the Text, of *his Acts, and of his Goodness* (or his *Kindnesses*, as your Margin justly reads it.)

He was not destitute of any of those excellent Qualities I have mention'd; Sure he must have had a large and capacious mind, that cou'd begin and carry on with such success, so intricate and difficult a work as that of Reformation, when his years were so green, and before he had any

advantage of Age and Experience to ripen his Judgment, (See 2 Chron. 34. v. 34.) And the extraordinary diligence wherewith he followed it, shews his intense application to publick affairs, (see v. 6, 7.) His exact Justice is doubtless included in that general character, (2 Chron. 34. v. 2.) Of his generous and bountiful disposition, there is a noble Instance recorded, (2 Chron. 35. v. 7.) And of that tender Love he bore to his people (one of the most amiable Qualities of a good Prince) we have two remarkable proofs ; The one in the 19th and 27th ver. of the 34th Ch. where the perusal of those threatnings the Law of God had denounc't against that sinful Nation, so affected his heart, that *he rent his clothes*, and the prospect of their danger drew a flood of Tears from his eyes. The other we have in this Chapter, and it was such a proof of his Affection to his people, as cost both them and him very dear. For his eager concern to prevent the danger which he thought threatned his Kingdom from the passage of the Egyptian Army thro some parts of it, to encounter the Assyrian, engag'd him in that hasty and imprudent Attempt to oppose 'em, that bereav'd his undeserving People of a Life he was on this occasion too forward and prodigal to expose for their preservation.

And no wonder these Royal Vertues so endear'd this Excellent King to his People, when they had so long shed their happy influence upon 'em in the course of his just and gracious Government ; so that his Death seem'd to 'em like the taking the very *Breath from their Nostrils*, like the rending away that Soul that had so long enliven'd and cherish'd their Political Body, To allude to the Expression us'd, 4 Lam. 20.

But the Death of such Princes is also a publick Calamity and Loss to a People.

2. *In respect of their Religious Interests.*

And as those are infinitely more valuable than any other, so the fatal consequences which the Death of pious Princes is usually attended with as to them, gives a peculiar Accent to our Sorrows on the account of it. Eminent Piety is so great a Rarity in the Courts of Princes, which abound with so numerous temptations to Vice; and 'tis so unusual and difficult a thing to be *Great and Good*, that where the *Graces of the Spirit of God* are found in a happy Conjunction with the *Glories of an Earthly Crown*, such a Prince is indeed the *Phoenix*, the *Honour* and the *Blessing* of the Age he lives in; so that the Loss of him is almost irreparable. When a Nation is favour'd with such a Prince as this, Who to all other Vertues adds this of ardent Zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of Souls; Who is himself a diligent Student of his holy word, and draws from thence the best maxims of true Policy, and heavenly Wisdom; Who considers himself as the *Minister of God*, whose Government shou'd be conform'd to the excellent ends of his; Who resolutely employs his Authority to maintain the uncorrupted Purity of Religion in it's Doctrine, Worship, and Sacred Discipline, and to promote the strict observance of the Divine Laws; Who understands the true Interest of practical Christianity and Holiness, and bends his main force and study to encourage and strengthen that; Who applies his wise and healing Counsels to establish a necessary Unity in the undoubted Essentials of Faith and Holiness, and to promote a happy Concord in affection, where mens different apprehensions about lesser things will not admit of a strict Uniformity in doubtful Opinions and Practices; Who protects and cherishes with a paternal favour and care, all faithful laborious Pastors and their Flocks, and is solicitous to diffuse the light of divine Knowledge into the darkest corners of his Dominions, by thrusting out Labourers into

into those necessitous parts of the Harvest; Who weilds the Sword of Justice as a *Terror to to all Evil-doers*, and that with so undaunted Zeal and Courage as to make Iniquity stop it's mouth, and lay some effectual restraint on open and insolent Wickedness; And to add no more, Whose blameless Life sets before his People an amiable Pattern of that holy Religion his Power is employ'd to defend, and draws as many by it's attractive Influence to be the cordial Votaries of Piety, as his Authority awes into an external profession of it; I say, When a Nation is favour'd from Heaven with such a Prince as this, How invaluable a Mercy is his Life and Reign, and how great and glorious Effects may be expected from it! How solid Support will the precious Interest of Religion derive from his Power, how abundant Encouragement from his Bounty and Favour, and how charming a Lustre from his bright Example! So that his Subjects must have lost all sense of it's value, if they do not sympathize with it in the Loss of so powerful a Protector and Friend: If we have any concern for the glory of God, it must needs peirce our hearts when so Eminent Instruments of it are remov'd. If we have the genuine Affections of the living members of the Church, we shall weep with her, when she is bereav'd of such Kings or Queens as have been such tender Nursing-Fathers or Nursing-Mothers to her.

And this was the very Case of the People in my Text; For tho *Josiah* was adorn'd with all other Princely Vertues, yet as smaller precious Stones almost disappear when they stand near some large and sparkling Jewel, so are these other excellent Qualities almost obscur'd in the short History of his Reign, by the Lustre of his signal Piety. And this indeed shone in him with the most bright and conspicuous Rays, and makes up the main part of his Character.

His Piety was remarkable for the *Earliness* of it in an Age commonly addicted to Folly and Vanity, and estrang'd from all serious thoughts and counsels. For 'tis recorded to his singular Honour, *that in the 8th year of his Reign, (and in the 16th of his Age), while he was yet young, he began to seek the God of David his Father, (2 Chron. 34. v. 3.).* Nay, this Circumstance does the more commend and set it off, that he herein happily declin'd from the steps of his wicked Father and Grandfather, who had both revolted from the true Religion; But he adher'd to the God of Israel whom they had forsaken, and became as *illustrious* for restoring, as they had made themselves *infamous* by abandoning his true Worship. And so *universal* and *accurate* was his Piety, that he is said *to have done that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, without declining to the right hand or the left, (2 Chr. 34. v. 2.)* And so admirably fervent was his Zeal in it, that we are told, *Like to him was no King before him, that turn'd to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, neither arose any after him like unto him, (2 Kings 23. v. 25.)* And we need no other proof hereof then the wonderful Effects of his holy Zeal recorded in this and the foregoing Chapter. He began first with the extirpation of that wretched *Baalitish* Idolatry that had so universally polluted the Land, of which he took the exactest care possible to destroy all the reliques and monuments that cou'd be found. And to fix in the minds of the people the utmost detestation of 'em, he desil'd those Altars with burning on 'em the bones of the Idolatrous Priests, that had been worse desil'd with their curst Sacrifices before, *(2 Chron. 34. from the 3d. to the 8th v.)* Having finish'd that, he then set upon the reparation of the House of God, a great part whereof had been ruined in the former Reigns. (See from v. 8. to v. 14.) And when *Hilkiah* the Priest found the Book of the Law of God,

(of which it seems the Copy had long lain in obscurity, and rust, and no wonder then the people were sunk into general ignorance of it) he not only heard it read with devout Attention, but upon the perusal of it, bitterly lamented the woful violation of it, which the people had long been guilty of, caus'd it to be publickly read to 'em, and by the influence of his Authority and Example induc't 'em to enter into a solemn Covenant for the strict observation of it. (See 2 Chron. 34 Ch. from v. 14. to the end.) And particularly he begins with restoring that grand solemnity of their Religion, the *Paschal Feast*, to the strictness of it's first Institution, so punctually reducing it's observance to what the Law enjoyn'd, that 'tis said *there had not been such a Passover kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the Prophet*, (2 Chron. 35. v. 18) Nor was his Zeal only levell'd against the corruptions of divine Worship, but was equally bent against *Immorality and Wickedness*. For we read of *his breaking down the houses of the Sodomites, and his putting away the Workers with familiar Spirits and the Wizards*, (2 Kings 23. v. 7. 24) No wonder then that his people shou'd pay so profound a Veneration to so admirably pious a Prince as this. For tho the generality of 'em seem only to have dissented in their external compliance with the Reformation he advanc'd, (as we may infer from the sequel of the History) yet they had so much secret reverence for Religion left, that his wonderful Zeal in it carry'd too powerful charms to be resisted; And it made so deep Impression on the minds of all that were truly good, that they look't on his Fall as a Death-wound to that Religion his Life had restor'd, and lamented over it, as ready to be buried under the ruines of so noble a Patron of it. But

Secondly, The Death of Excellent and Religious Princes is much more a publick Calamity and Affliction, when attended with these two aggravating Circumstances, *viz.*

When

When they are cut off in the flower of their age, and in the prosecution of their glorious Designs for the publick Good.

And it was these two particular Circumstances that gave so sharp an Edge to this affliction in the Text, and made it pierce so deep into the hearts of the people. Good *Josiah* was now only in the 39th year of his age, tho in the 31st of his Reign. According to the ordinary course of nature, he might have swayed the Jewish Scepter as many years yet to come. And since he carried on the blessed work of Reformation to so great a height in so short a time, to what a degree of perfection might he have brought it, had he reach'd to the same age as many of his Predecessors had done before him? That solemn Celebration of the Passover is the last act of his recorded before this surprizing account of his death. So that he not only fell in the prime of his years, but was carried off the Stage, when acting the most desirable and useful part upon it. And no wonder then that this stroke shou'd appear so terrible, which so quickly bereav'd 'em of a Life & Reign, on the long continuance whereof they had rais'd so great Expectations. And therefore the learned *A. B. Usher* supposes that passage in the Lamentations to point to this violent death of *Josiah*, (*ch. 4. v. 20.*) *The Breath of our Nostrils, The Lord's Anointed was taken in their pits, of whom we said, under his shadow we shall live among the Heathen.*

And indeed the death of such Pious Princes may justly be then reckon'd a more sensible and wounding loss, when 'tis sudden and unexpected. When they dye in a *Good old Age*, and full of days their people are in some measure prepar'd for such a stroke by the warnings that their natural Infirmities give others as well as themselves of it. And there is just occasion to be thankful that their happy Government has been continued so long, as well as to regret that they must resign it at last, and that we cannot in them protract the time of life beyond the usual extent and date of it. But

when their Constitution seems to be firm, their Health in it's vigour, and their reasonable powers in their vivacity, when their minds are fill'd with those noble projects for the Glory of God, the advancement of true Religion, and the welfare of their Subjects, which are the result of Experience, and of wise deliberate Counsels, And when thro' their entire Ascendant over the affections of their People, they are possess'd of all advantages for the accomplishment of such glorious Designs; And to add no more, when we are promising to our selves the happy, product and fruits of all this; if now an unforeseen accident forcibly snatch and tear 'em from us, if a sudden distemper in a few hours or days hurry 'em from the Throne to the Grave, If now Death, that grim Pursivant be sent with a Commission to arrest and carry 'em off from the very scene of publick action, if now *their breath go forth, and they return to the earth, and their thoughts in one day perish,* (Ps. 146. v. 4.) What Terror & Consternation, what Fear & Grief may this justly possess their people with, when they see all their passionate wishes cross'd, all their mighty hopes blasted, and those probable Instruments of publick good so suddenly and irrecoverably ravish'd from 'em! How dismal a prospect of things may this deservedly give 'em! Which leads me to the 2d general Head.

II. The Death of Excellent and Religious Princes, when attended with these aggravating Circumstances, is much more a just ground of deep and general Lamentation, consider'd, *As a mark of God's displeasure against the sins of their People, and often a presage of destructive Vengeance.*

I. The Death of such Princes when they are thus cut off in the flower of their Age, and in the height of their publick usefulness, is *always a mark of God's just displeasure against the sins of their People.*

So important Events as these doubtless come under the accurate disposal of his Sovereign Providence. If the least
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Sparrow fall not to the ground without our Heavenly Father, (Matth 10. v. 29.) Much less is the *Fall* of the *Greatest* and *Best* of *men*, in respect of his purpose and conduct, a contingent and uncertain Event. *If the hairs of every good man's head be numbred,* (v. 30.) Much more are the *Lives* of *Good Princes* under his observant Eye & Care. 'Tis asserted by the inspired Penman concerning every particular person, *That their days are determin'd, that the number of their months is with God, that he has appointed their bounds that they cannot pass,* (Job 14. v. 5.) And sure 'tis no less applicable to those Glorious Instruments of his Providence, on whose death so great Revolutions & Turns of publick Affairs usually depend. He *by whom Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice*, has in his Eternal Counsels fix'd the *Epocha* and *period*, when their Government shall *begin* and *end*, and that in a subserviency to the designs of his own *Wisdom*, and usually for the illustration of his *Justice* or *Mercy* towards their People. When therefore a righteous God brings on a sinful people so surprizing a Calamity as the unexpected death of an eminently pious Prince, snatch't away in the prime of his years, and in the prosecution of great designs for the publick good, this does by no means look like a meer act of *Sovereignty* and *Dominion*; It carries the plain characters of *Vindictive Justice* engraven on it. Such a people may reasonably conclude, 'tis some National offences that have provok't him to deprive them of so inestimable a *National Blessing*; And when the *Crown is thus (unexpectedly) fallen from their heads*, 'Tis a very obvious and just Reflection on so terrible a stroke, *Wo unto us that we have sinned,* (Lam. 5. v. 16.) For a gracious God has too indulgent an affection to his Church, to take away by an immature death her tender Nourishers and Guardians; where her undutiful carriage has not provok't him to an act of so great severity, and even extorted so awful a Judgment from him. He seems to be deeply offended

with a degenerate age, when those are long suffer'd to Reign and prosper, who are Monsters of Wickedness, and the common *Plague* and *Scourge* of the Earth; while those excellent Princes, who were publick Patterns of Piety, are but just shewn to the world, and then withdrawn from it as unworthy of 'em.

2. Nay, sometimes such a stroke as this is not only an indication of God's displeasure in General, But a *sad presage of destructive Vengeance it self*. As when it comes on a people at the heels of many lesser *Monitory* Judgments in vain us'd to recover 'em to serious Repentance, and seems to make way for the full execution of that *Destructive* Indignation which their *incurable* obstinacy in grievous and National sins has been long ripening and preparing 'em for.

• And this was the very case of the People in my Text, and this very Consideration seems to have been the chief Spring of their extraordinary sorrow.

This People had for several successive Reigns been guilty of great backslidings from God. They had frequently revolted to the gross Idolatry of *Baal*. They had sunk into woful Ignorance of the Law of God, and greatly depriv'd his Instituted Worship. And a general Torrent of Immoralities had broke loose among 'em. God had rais'd up among 'em a succession of several extraordinary Prophets, who describ'd their guilt to 'em in the most lively colours, upbraided 'em with their great ingratitude and obstinacy, and on the score of it denounc'd his desolating Judgments upon 'em, and particularly that of the *Babylonish Captivity*. Inasmuch as when good *Josiah* (who from the Threatnings contain'd in the Book of the Law, plainly foresaw the great wrath of God ready to be pour'd down upon 'em) sent to consult *Huldah* the Prophetess. He has indeed a favourable message return'd relating to himself, *That he shou'd be gather'd to his Fathers in peace*, and shou'd not live to be a sorrowful Spec-

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Crator of those tremendous Judgments, or sharer in 'em. But for the *Nation*, His *Anger* was now kindled into too violent a flame to be *quench'd*, His *Patience* wou'd no longer forbear to avenge the crimes of their Fore fathers on their incorrigible Posterity. (For indeed the compliance of the generality with *Josiah's* Reformation was but feign'd, as appears by their quickly relapsing in the Reign of his Successor.) And tho the life of this pious Prince shou'd a while *suspend*, yet it shou'd not *prevent* the ruining vengeance that was threatn'd, (see 2 *Chron.* 34. v. 24, 25. 26.)

No wonder then that his sudden death shou'd affect 'em in so extraordinary a manner, when it seem'd to cut off from 'em all the hope that remain'd of preventing the utter destruction denounc'd against 'em, and so left 'em now open and unguarded to the stroke of inexorable Justice. Nay, no wonder we read so particularly of *Jeremiah* lamenting for *Josiah*; Well might he now wish, *That his Head were waters, and his Eyes a fountain of tears*, (*Jer.* 9. v. 1.) When the death of this Godly Prince did present all the miseries of a long Captivity to his view, and gave him the doleful prospect of it's near and inevitable approach on that guilty people. And therefore some suppose (and not improbably) that he then in a prophetick rapture of grief, penn'd the *Lamentations*, in which those woful calamitys are so pathetically describ'd, as already inflicted, which were so near a coming.

And sure there is great reason to lament the death of pious Princes, when it carrys so sad a prognostick of the vengeance hastning on a wicked people, for whose final ruine a just God is preparing, by beginning to remove the only Instruments likely to prevent it. And therefore such dying Princes may bespeak their people in the language of *Christ* to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, *Weep not for me, but weep for your selves and your children*, on whom the dismal times are
coming

coming, wherein it shall be said, *Blessed are the barren, even the Wombs that never bare, and the Paps that never gave suck,* (Luke 23. v. 28, 29.)

It remains now that we apply what has been said to our own case, And

1. Let us hence consider, *How just occasion the unexpected death of our late Religious Queen gives us for deep and general lamentation.*

2. Let us learn to turn our sorrow into the right Channel, and improve it to the best purposes.

I. Let us here consider, *how just occasion the unexpected death of our late Religious Queen gives us for deep and general Lamentation.*

To mourn for her, is a Tribute we owe to her memory, if we only consider'd the excellent Qualities she was endu'd with, which represent our loss of her as invaluable great. I shall not indeed attempt to give her character, but leave that to such as had a nearer view, and have a fitter pencil to draw the portraiture of her excellent Mind. And therefore shall only suggest, That besides all those amiable Vertues that render'd her the glory of her Sex, there were many becoming her eminent Station, that shone with so bright a light, as cou'd not fail to attract the eyes and admiration of all her Subjects; such as that rare *Humility* and *Condescension* with which Majesty and Greatness was so sweetly temper'd in her; Her extraordinary *Clemency* and *Goodness*; Her tender affectionate Concern for her People; Her prudent and steady *Conduct*; and her unshaken *Resolution* in the administration of publick Affairs, when left in her hands at such a juncture, wherein we were threatned with eminent dangers both from open Enemies abroad, and discontented ones at home; But above all, Her great and exemplary *Piety*. As to which I shall only add, That as the Piety of *Josiah* was the more remarkable, because he was
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the Son of a Father who had disown'd the true Religion; and as it was the singular commendation of *Abijah* the Son of *Jeroboam*, that in him was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in that house, (1. Kings 14. v. 13.) So 'tis the honour of our late *Queen*, (in which her Royal Sister has also happily follow'd her Example) that she firmly adher'd to that *Reformed Religion* which her *Father* had abandon'd, (whose perversion to the *Romish* Idolatry put him on those unhappy measures which had like to have been pernicious to the whole Protestant Interest in *Europe*, but by a just overruling Providence prov'd only fatal to his own.) And indeed when we consider the signal hand of God in that glorious Revolution, The Crown seems to have been plac'd on her Head by Heaven, as the Reward of her Piety. Nor was she one of those superficial Votarys that Interest often proselytes to the external profession of the true Religion. Her sincere and ardent Zeal for it appear'd with the most convincing Evidence, not only in the constancy of her publick and private Devotions, but in that purity of an unstained Conversation that is it's most genuine fruit, and it's truest glory. Nor do we want abundant proof of her pious concern to revive the practice of it in a degenerate Age; besides the great designs of that kind, which we are assur'd (from the testimony of the late A. B. of *Canterbury*, who frequently convers'd with her on that Subject) she had form'd in her mind. So that I think we may justly say, that since the death of our former English *Joseph Edward* the 6th, none has ever since sat on the Throne, that has given more evident marks of a sincere love of Piety and exemplary practice of it.

And that which renders her death the more justly lamented, is the *suddenness* & *surprize* of it. It was the effect of a violent Distemper that forcibly ravish'd her as it were out of the very hearts of her affectionate Subjects, when we

were so far from apprehending the danger of so dismal a Loss, that we were flattering our selves with great expectations of a lasting settlement under her happy Reign. Nay, she seems snatch't away at a juncture, that renders the greatness of our loss the more sensible to us, when the share of publick action abroad still devolv'd upon our Sovereign, made her presence and conduct at home the most necessary to us.

Shall then the sudden Removal of so eminent a publick Blessing leave us stupid and unaffected, as if we had no sense of so deep a Calamity? For such an eminent publick Blessing, true Piety renders those Crowned Heads in whom 'tis found, and in whom 'tis like to be so vastly *communicative & diffusive* a Good. For in them it always derives a more attractive Lustre from their eminent Character and Dignity, to recommend it to others, like a rich Diamond sett to the greatest advantage, or an exquisite Picture plac'd in the best light to charm the Beholders eyes. In them it appears that true Piety is so far from being a mean Quality only suitable to those of an inferior Rank, that on the contrary, nothing can more truly ennoble the Mind, and inspire it with great thoughts and glorious designs; so that where-ever 'tis found in the greatest of Earthly Potentates, 'tis always the brightest Jewel in their Crowns, and transmits their Name and Memory to succeeding Ages with the most lasting Honour. Their charming Example has a mighty tendency to recover Religion to it's just repute and veneration among men, and draws others to an imitation by an insensible and sweet, but almost irresistible force. Nay in them Religion is back't with that Power, that may contribute much not only to it's *support and defence*, but to the *enlargement and extension* of it's interest in the world. For tho' the *internal* and vital power of Religion in the hearts of it's sincere Professors can bear up against the most violent storms of Persecution,

cution, like those excellent Plants that retain their verdure during the severity of the sharpest Winter, yet it's *external* Interest is like to grow more, it will most effectually spread it's Branches, and propagate it self by a large accession of Converts, under the warm auspicious rays of Civil Power, when 'tis furnish'd with all the Advantages and Encouragements that the Favour and Bounty of Pious Princes can give it.

And shall we not then lament that untimely Death that has bereav'd the Age of so noble a *Patron*, Religion of so cordial a *Patron* and *Friend*, the Church of God of so tender a *Nursing*, and these three *Kingdoms* of a *Princess* whose Interest in the hearts of all sincere Protestants, contributed so much to this great and happy Revolution? Shall not her Death be as much the *universal* Grief, as her Life and her Reign has been the *universal* Joy of her People?

But sure the Consideration of her immature Death will more powerfully affect and pierce our hearts, if we regard it, as an awful mark of the displeasure of God, and as carrying some suspicious presages of destructive Vengeance.

We shou'd be very stupid indeed, if we did not resent the unexpected death of so pious a Princess as a severe Judgment. We have no reason to doubt that 'tis our heinous sins have provok't a righteous God to take away from these three Kingdoms the desire of their Eyes. If such Kings & Queens as are *Nursing-Fathers* and *Nursing-Mothers* to God's Israel, be promis't as the most signal Blessing, (Isa. 49. v. 23.) The untimely removal of 'em must needs be as remarkable a *Curse* and *Punishment*. It wou'd argue little better than a profane contempt of the Justice of God, shou'd we overlook to awful effects of it. If we shou'd not feel when he smites us with so terrible a stroke, as looks not like the gentle rebuke of a *Friend*, but the deadly wound of an incensed *Enemy*.

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For there seems to be something in this surprizing Calamity that has a more dreadful Aspect upon us than ordinary Judgments have. To clear this, It will be necessary to take some short review of our carriage towards the Great God, and the remarkable steps of his Providence towards us. If we look back as far as the two preceding Reigns; It is a sad, but just and obvious Reflection that has been made by all sober persons, that the former of 'em was attended with the most violent and general inundation of Atheism & Infidelity, Leudness & Immorality that perhaps was ever known in these Nations since the light of the Reformed Religion shone in 'em. The Contagion having infected the Court, soon spread it self with an irresistable force to the remotest parts of these Kingdoms.

And as for those inconsiderable & unhappy differences that continue amongst us notwithstanding our professing the same Reformed Religion, so far were any moderate and healing methods from being pursued in order to the composing 'em, that on the contrary they were greatly widen'd, partly by those Narrow Terms of Ministerial Conformity that have exclud'd some thousands of judicious and pious Labourers from the publick Vineyard, and partly by those Additional Laws that let loose the reins to a spirit of Revenge and Persecution. And this was attended with fatal consequences to the Interest of Religion it self, not only by diverting the Zeal of good men from the Substantials of it to less important Opinions and Practices, but especially by giving the profaner part of the Age a specious opportunity of venting their natural enmity against practical Piety it self as cloth'd with those odious nick-names they had fastned upon it. Nor did our Popish Enemies fail to improve these fatal Advantages given 'em to strengthen their Interest by weakening and dividing our's. On the contrary, they manag'd 'em so effectually by their secret but powerful influence on

an unhappy *Prince*, that the vigorous attempts of two successive *Parliaments* (inspir'd with the true Zeal of *Englishmen* and *Protestants*) to stemm the Tide of Popery, serv'd only to expose our noblest *Patriots* to the malice and artifices of that Party, and to facilitate the Ascent of a *Prince of that Religion* to the Throne. In his *Reign*, the swift advances of arbitrary Power (swell'd with an easy Triumph over a feeble opposition) did so effectually prepare the way for the re-establishment of the *Romish Religion*, that the *Protestant* Interest seem'd in the judgment of all it's considerate and serious Professors to stand on the very brink of ruine. And in this Kingdom, it was actually so far consign'd into the hands of our Popish Adversarys, that tho we are now rescued from 'em, we yet groan under the desolating ruines we were then involv'd in, and carry the broad Scars of those deep *Wounds* visible upon us. But the tender bowels of divine pitty did at that time move towards a guilty People, and surpriz'd us with an amazing deliverance when we thought our destruction inevitable. Our present *King*, and late *Queen* were honour'd by Heaven to be the happy Instruments of saving three perishing Kingdoms from impending Ruine. And now sure it might justly have been expected that the terrible Judgments to which our sins had expos'd us, shou'd effectually awaken us to serious Repentance; or at least that such miracles of mercy shou'd powerfully oblige and constrain us to it. But alas, how far so mutable and so extraordinary methods of divine Providence have been from attaining this excellent end, is too obvious to our sad Reflections. Never sure were so awful Judgments so wretchedly slighted, nor so eminent Favour's requited with so vile ingratitude. Our Fears seem'd to lay some present restraint upon us; But we quickly return'd to our sins as soon as our dangers were over, as if our deliverance had only embolden'd us to

offend with greater hope of impunity. The wonderful mercy of God in shaking the heavy yoke of our enemies from off our necks, seem'd to have no other effect upon us, then to encourage us the more boldly to cast off the Bonds of his own just and gracious Government. 'Tis true indeed, some endeavours were us'd to check that Torrent of open Profaneness and Debauchery that had again broke out so violently among us. Some *Proclamations* and *Orders* to that end were issued from the *Throne*, and some few *inferior Magistrates* shew'd some Zeal to second the Pious Intentions of our Rulers ; But the *Disease* was too strong for the *Remedy*, and all this prov'd only a feeble ineffectual attempt, like the opposing a *weak Digue* to the impetuous violence of a *boisterous Sea*. 'Tis true also, we owe the seasonable repeal of many Laws, whose severity had long tended to alienate the affections of Protestants from each other, to the better temper, and the moderate Counsels that this happy Revolution brought along with it ; But the *Proposals* tending to lay the groundwork of a desirable *Accommodation* have been hitherto unsuccessful. Now the great God (whose just expectations from us have been thus frustrated) has not fail'd to make us sensible of his displeasure, not only in the continued expences of a tedious War, but in so frequently giving our Enemies fatal advantages to insult and triumph over us, and reducing our affairs into a very hazardous posture. But alas, how stupid have the generality been under all these visible indications of divine anger, sinning on with a cursed impudence in the face of all these monitory Judgments, and turning a deaf ear to all the Remonstrances made to 'em of their guilt and their danger !

And what method is the great God now taking with us ? He has been hitherto *lopping off our branches*, he is now *lying the Ax of his Judgments to the Root of the Tree*, and has already cut down one of those *Props* on which our confidence of publick

publick safety was born up. He has remov'd one of those glorious Instruments he had made use of to effect our deliverance. And now he lets us see upon how slender a thread our most valuable Interests either as *Men* or *Christians* seem to depend, and how easily he can sink us again into those Confusions and Miserys out of which we have escap'd. He now seems to tell us loudly, that he is repenting of all the good he has done unto us, and if some visible and speedy Repentance on our part prevent not, we may expect to see that glorious scene of Providence revers'd, which our ingratitude and obstinate wickedness has rendred us so unworthy of. For such an event as this looks not like the correction of a Father, but the vengeance of a Judge; Not like a merciful Warning, but rather like the opening the Sluce to let in a flood of more desolating Miserys than we have yet beheld. And shall we not tremble at the awful voice of the terrible Rod of God, who so loudly proclaims to us, That he will not be any longer out-brav'd by our bold impietys; But if we will not repent of 'em, neither will he repent of, but hasten to execute all the Evil that's determin'd upon us? What reason then have we to lament the Death of this Religious Princess, when she seems (like good *Josiah*) sent to her Grave in Peace, that her eyes may not behold the terrible effects of divine wrath coming upon an impenitent Generation! Nay, how particular reason have God's faithful messengers to lament, who have so great ground to apprehend this stroke as the beginning of those destructive Judgments they have hitherto in vain warn'd a secure and incorrigible people to obviate by a general Repentance?

But this leads me to the other Use.

II. *Let us turn our sorrow into the right Channel, and improve it to the best purposes.*

And

And here,

1. *Let our Grief for this Affliction be turn'd into a just sorrow for our sins, that have thus kindled the displeasure of God against us.*

And O that Rivers of Tears might run down our eyes, when we reflect on those publick provocations that have thus arm'd the vengeance of the great God against us! And is it not a dismal consideration, that no endearing obligations of mercy will bind a disingenuous and unthankful; Nay, no monitory judgments awaken a secure and stupid People! shou'd it not pierce our hearts to think, that the most open marks of practical Atheism and contempt of God, I mean our hellish *Oaths* and *Curses*, shou'd be so commonly heard among a people, who have lately beheld such astonishing effects of his power and mercy in our preservation, as if we thought our selves deliver'd to do all these abominations? That the same Luxury & Sensuality, Intemperance and Uncleaness, Pride & vanity, &c. shou'd still defile these Lands that lately expos'd 'em to the danger of such a deluge of miseries? That *Magistrates* & *Ministers* have been no more zealous to oppose this stream of Irreligion and Licentiousness, the one by the coercive power of the *Sword*, the other by the faithful reproofs of the *Word*? That what has been done has hitherto prov'd so fruitless and ineffectual? That there seems to be so little hope left of any general effectual Reformation? That all farther attempts towards it seem to be given over as vain and impracticable? As if we were resolv'd to sin on and leave it to the venture, whether a just God will go on to punish? O what reason have we to read and tremble at that awful passage, (*Amos 4. v. 12*) The great God had visited that People with three successive Judgments, *But they wou'd not return to him*; And therefore he sends 'em this dreadful challenge, *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do thus unto thee, Prepare*

part to meet thy God, O Israel. q.d. Expect now a Punishment that shall be as unparallel'd and unexampled as your incurable obstinacy has been; And therefore prepare now to encounter the vengeance of an Incensed God.

2. Let us be excited to deprecate the farther effects of divine Anger with the greatest earnestness.

And O what cause have we to humble our selves under the mighty hand of God that's so visibly stretch't out against us! To own and vindicate his Righteousness in the severest of his Judgments, to accept the punishment of our Iniquitys, *being dumb and silent because he has done it!* (Ps. 39. v. 9) What occasion have we now to beg more importunately than ever, That he wou'd spare an offending people, and stop the course of his vindictive Justice, and *in the midst of Judgment remember mercy!* How fervent shou'd our supplications be for the preservation of that valuable life that's yet left to us, the continuance whereof seems yet to give us a reprieve and respite from those destructive Calamitys we fear! How shou'd we (as David in the behalf of his people) stand between the *destroying Angel* and our *dread Sovereign*, that the vengeance may proceed no farther! And especially when He's about to expose his life to new hazards in the publick Cause, What reason have we to tremble and fear least our sins shou'd furnish us with such another subject of more bitter mourning than that in my Text! What need have we then to hold up by earnest Prayer the inviolable shield of divine protection over him! And sure it wou'd be a dreadful symptom upon us, if the fervour of our supplications shou'd abate when our ~~sinners~~ *sinners* encrease; If while the hopes of our Enemies are rais'd, the hands of Prayer shou'd hang down; If when the avenging Arm of God is again lifted up, there shou'd be none among us that *stir up themselves to take bold of him*, in order to the making Peace, (Isa. 64. v. 7.)

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3. Let

3. *Let us be excited to serious Repentance in order to the success of our Prayers for averting the farther Effects of divine displeasure.*

And O that our King and our Magistrates may imitate the excellent Pattern in my Text! That they wou'd read the word of God, believe the terrible threatnings of it, rend their clothes, and weep over the Nations sins and their own, from a holy dread of that terrible wrath that yet hangs over us! (2 Chron. 34. v. 18, 19, &c.) O that they wou'd by their own example and authority engage their people to renew their Covenant with an offended God, in order to the regaining his forfeited favour! (v. 29, 30, 31, &c.) O that they wou'd at length resolve to lay out their power with courage and zeal, to promote the observance and restrain the open violation of his holy Laws, as perswaded that nothing short of a national Reformation can prevent our ruine! O that God's faithful Ministers wou'd *sound their Trumpet yet louder, to awaken (if possible) a sleepy generation to a sense of their aggravated guilt, and their extreme danger, before they be surpriz'd with remediless vengeance.* May every one of us at least resolve to reform our own hearts and lives, nay to reform our families, and (as far as our Interest and power can reach) to promote the reformation of others. *For who can tell if God will turn, and repent and turn away from his fierce Anger, that we perish not? (Jonah 3. v. 9.)* And shou'd this awful Judgment produce so genuine & happy an effect as a general Repentance, how easily can the great God make up that extreme Loss we have sustain'd, By blessing that honourable Instrument he has yet spar'd to us with more eminent Success in his great designs for the publick good. He that has so wonderfully preserv'd that precious life with a vigilant and tender care, when so oft within an inch of destruction, seems to have reserv'd it for some glorious purposes; And how easily can he prolong it till he has

has accomplish'd by him those gracious ones, viz. The deliverance of his oppressed Churches abroad, and the happy settlement of those at home, which he seem'd once to have entertain'd in his heart, and which nothing but our impenitency retards the execution of. In a word, our publick safety or danger entirely depends on the restored favour, or continu'd displeasure of the great Sovereign of the world; If he frown upon us, in vain do we promise our selves security from the greatest and best of Princes, whose breath is in their Nostrils, and who return to their dust; If he smile upon us, we may despise the threats of the most formidable Enemies, For why shou'd those be afraid of a man that shall dye, or of the son of man that shall be as grass, who have the Eternal God for their Refuge and Defence. For happy is the People whose God is the Lord, (Psa 144. 2. 15.)

SERM

Sermon II.

Lament. 5. ver. 16. *The Crown is fallen from our Head; Woe to us that we have sinned.*

WHEN persons of extraordinary Eminency in *Place and Worth*, are surpriz'd by *Death*, there is a tribute of sorrow due to such *Illustrious Characters* at their Fall; and of how much the greater importance their lives were, to the invaluable interests of *Religion*, so much the louder is our call to Solemnize their death by our affectionate *Lamentations*. But while our mourning is warrantable and just as to the occasion, It shou'd be our care that it be well regulated as to the *manner*, and duly proportion'd in its extent and *measure*. 'Tis not therefore enough to pour out a few *sighs and tears* on so sad an occasion, and so dismiss the awful *Dispensation* with a superficial view; but Reason as well as *Grace* shou'd instruct us to search further, and to look upward to the *Sovereign Hand* by which the stroke is inflicted, as well as backward to the *causes* by which it was procured, and forward to the calamitous *events* that may be further threatned. And to this course we are directed by the example of an *inspired Prophet* in the words of my *Text*. Which are a part of the doleful *Lamentations* the Prophet *Jeremiah* pours forth over the ruins of the house of *God*, and the Kingdom of *Judah*. Some conceive they were compos'd at the death of *Josiah*, and if so, the tragical

cal events in the siege and captivity which he so graphically describes, are expressed by way of *Prophetic* anticipation; But if they were indited during the captivity, it is yet manifest, that with the *Prophet*, the death of *Josiah* was the fatal *Epitaph* from whence he dates the beginning of all the miseries he laments; 'twas then, that the course of Divine Providence was visibly turned from *Monitory* to *Vindictive*.

In the words there are three things considerable, (1) *The stroke of God's displeased hand upon his visible people, The Crown is fallen from our head*, which expression may be applied two ways, (1) *To the state of Judah* under the captivity, when they had lost from among them the power of Civil Magistracy, and fell under the Conquering Sword of the *Babylonish Empire*; the Crown (which is the Ensign of Sovereign Power) was then snatcht from their Head, and translated to another. Or, (2.) *To the death of Josiah*, and the words may be rendred more favorably to this sense, *The Crown of our head is fallen*; a Crown is the Emblem of Excellency; and according to this sense, the *Prophet* insinuates, that when *Josiah* was dead, the glory of the Kingdom was lost, and the State itself left in a tottering uncertain condition: and if this latter be not the full and direct meaning of the place, yet it may be conveniently included as a part, and so much the rather, because the Holy Ghost assures us, that *Jeremiah* lamented for *Josiah*, and their mournful Song on that occasion was written in the *Lamentations*. (See *2 Chron. 35. v. 25.*) Now there is no other passage in this Book directly applicable to *Josiah's Death*, but only this; and, *Chap. 4. v. 20.* In this sense therefore I shall take leave to understand this expression as referring to *Josiah's Death*.

2. *The 2d thing considerable in the words, is the sense which the Prophet (or the Church which he personates) ex-*

presses of this stroke, *Woe unto us*, a mournful Exclamation, by which they express their repentment of the loss they had already sustained, and their apprehensiveness of further evils which they still expected: *q. d.* "Ah wretched people! How dismal is the appearance of this Providence?" "This looks indeed like the beginning of those terrible Judgments which the Prophets have so long denounced against us: This is a stroke that seems full of woe and wrath."

3. *You have in the words the reflection they make under this sense of their loss, We have sinned.* When Conscience is awakened under divine rebukes, it will not fail to point us to sin as the cause of our suffering; there's the monstrous Womb that has brought forth the wrathful Birth.

The scope of the words thus understood, is comprised in this Observation,

Docr. That the untimely Fall of Religious Princes is to be looked on, and lamented as a fruit of their people's sins.

Now in the prosecution of this Truth, it will be requisite to answer these ~~two~~ *Inquiries* before I come to apply it to our present case:

1. *What those sins in a people are, to which we may ascribe the untimely Fall of Religious Princes?*

2. *How it does appear that the untimely Fall of Religious Princes shou'd be looked at, and lamented as the fruit of their people's sins?*

As to the former, I shall not descend unto a more particular answer to it, than the consideration of the state of the people of *Judah* leads me to, and there are two particulars very obvious concerning their Sin in the sacred Story.

1. *There was a woful entail of guilt transmitted to them from the two preceding Reigns of Manasseh and Amon, especially the former, (for Amon's was but short):* Inasmuch that the sacred *Historian* assures us, that 'twas the guilt then

contra-

contrasted, that made Josiah's reformation ineffectual to prevent the desolations God had threatened. (2 Kings 23 v. 26.) Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And again, (2 Kings 24. v. 3, 4.) Surely at the Commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; Also for the innocent Blood which he shed, (for he filled Jerusalem with innocent Blood) which the Lord would not pardon: 'Tis no unusual thing in the method of God's holy Providence, that the guilt of one generation should be avenged in another, and 'tis easy to apprehend that such a people are constituted in dangerous circumstances, in whose days the Ephah of Sin is full, that has been filling in former Reigns or Ages.

2dly, They continued impenitent, notwithstanding the noble attempts of Josiah to reform them, and some temporary external effects thereof. How fully is this expressed, (2 Chron: 36. v. 14, 15, 16.) Moreover all the chief of the Priests and people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the Heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending, because he had compassion on his People, and his dwelling place: But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his Word, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his People till there was no remedy. I have recited the words at large, because by an easy application they do but too nearly represent our sin and danger. The Sum is, there were pollutions in worship, and corruptions in practise, and an obstinate impenitency in both, generally prevailing: persons of all ranks and sorts being infected and invaded. And from hence we may infer, that when a professing people

ple become exceedingly degenerate, when they defile the worship of God with their inventions, and despise his sacred authority in their lives, and when under such abominations, they continue their hatred to be reformed, so that warnings by the word, and chastnings by the rod, prove unsuccessful;

In this case, the untimely death of Excellent and Hopeful Princes is not to be looked on as a common event of Providence, but a special fruit of Sin. And this is all I think needful to say under the first *Inquiry*, therefore,

2. *Why is the untimely Death of Excellent Religious Princes to be looked on, and lamented as the fruit of their people's Sin?*

A. This is a truth that carrys so much of it's own evidence along with it, that there is more need to awaken our Consciences, than convince our Judgments.

Briefly therefore,

1. *Such a sinful impenitent people render themselves altogether unworthy of so choice and excellent a Blessing as Religious Princes are.* Among all the temporal mercies which God bestows upon his people, a Godly Magistracy, and a Faithful Ministry are the chief. They are the *two Breasts* at which his Church suck, and is satisfied; they are the *two Witnesses* by whom the Interests of Religion are asserted and supported in the world. And as to a Godly Magistracy in particular, 'tis promised as a part of *Sion's* Glory in the latter days, when it shall be at the highest Elevation, *that King's shall be Nursing-Fathers, and Queens Nursing-Mothers,* (Isa. 49. v. 23.) When God sets up, and continues *Wise and Religious Princes* over his people, this is a convincing evidence of his love, and the peculiar regards of his Providence: as the Queen of *Sheba* told *Solomon*; *Because the Lord loveth Israel for ever, therefore made he thee King, to do Judgment and Justice,* (1 Kings 10. v. 9.)

Now

Now this being so rich a Blessing, an impenitent degenerate people render themselves unworthy to enjoy it; for it wou'd not be *congruous*, nor agreeable to the Wisdom of God, and the Righteousness of his Rule, to continue such peculiar favours unto those, who so wretchedly abuse them; Wou'd it be for the Honour of God to cherish stubborn Rebels in his Bosom, who are in open Hostility against him, and ungratefully trample on his Authority & Love? Wou'd not *Atheistical minds* be too ready to conclude that their Sins were pleasing in his sight, if the pledges of his especial and distinguishing kindness to his people, shou'd be vouchsaf'd to them? We find therefore the promise of an excellent Magistracy confin'd to a purified and reformed people. *Isa. 1. v. 25, 26. I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin. And then it follows, I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Counsellors as at the beginning: q. d. You shall then have such excellent Leaders again as Moles and Joshuah were, the renown of whose Wisdom and Success has reach'd down to all generations.* But impenitency in Sin renders a people so unworthy of this mercy, that it would not be for his Honour, long to continue it among them.

2. 'Tis Sin that renders an impenitent people incapable of the chiefest advantages that Religious Princes are instrumental to convey: It is the duty, and will be the great care of a pious Magistracy to promote and diffuse serious Religion among their Subjects, and to discountenance and punish Sin: This is the end of their Office; 'tis not *their own grandure or power* that is their highest end, but the Honour of God; They labour therefore to answer the end of their being, by making their Authority subservient unto God's: *They are a terror to evil works, but the ministers of God for good to them that do well, (Rom. 13. v. 3, 4.)* But now a degenerate people that are hardened in impenitency,

disappoint the endeavours of Religious Princes to reform them; and as we have had amazing instances thereof among our selves since the late merciful *Revolution*; so in former days Godly *Hezekiah* found *Israel* in a very degenerate case, and he zealously invites them to obedience, (*2 Chron. 30. 1.*) *And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote Letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they shou'd come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Pasover to the Lord God of Israel;* and the circular Letters which he sent abroad on that occasion are recited, 6, 7, 8, 9 verses, and are penned in a most excellent perswasive strain: Thus that godly Prince attempted to bring back a revolted people to their God: But alas, the *rude matter* was not capable of that *noble form* that his Royal Zeal would have cast 'em into: for *verse 10* you read that his messengers *were laughed to scorn, and mock't.*

Now, since an impenitent people are incapable of the chief Blessings which godly Princes are qualified to convey to 'em; Is it any wonder that they are removed from them? Religious Princes are too rare and extraordinary a piece of the divine workmanship, to be continued in vain. 'Tis but seldom that we see grace the ornament of the Purple Robe: *You see your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men, after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, (1 Cor. 1. v. 26.* The great God in his glorious Sovereignty, takes more of common clay than refined exalted dust, to make up the vessels of mercy: accordingly in the whole story of the Kings of *Judah*, we find not above seven or eight good ones, and in all the successions of the Throne of *Israel*, not one. It is therefore a peculiar and extraordinary Honour God puts upon Princes, when they have Grace from him to be *Religious indeed*. When *Royalty* and *Piety* meet together, such Princes are the Glories of mankind, truly Honourable, beyond expression valuable; such Gods on Earth

Earth are indeed bright resemblances of the *God of Heaven*; for they do not only represent his Authority, but bear the Image of those amiable perfections of his *Nature*, his *Purity*, and his *Goodness*: And can we imagine that *God* will long continue such bright Stars to shine, where they are of no use? No, when their Authority and Example are ineffectual to recover an hardened people, and has been afforded so long, as to leave 'em without excuse; they shall be translated to shine in an higher Orb: and disappear to an *unthankful World*, that did not improve their influence and light.

Thirdly, *The untimely Fall of Religious Princes is a penal stroke upon their people*, and therefore must be interpreted as a fruit of their people's sin. There is an unchangeable reference and respect in *Punishment* unto *Sin*; the suffering of sinless creatures (if they cou'd be liable to any) might be *afflictive*, but cou'd not be *penal*; they wou'd be acts of *Sovereignty*, wherein the Supreme Potter expresses his Dominion over his own Clay: but not acts of *Justice*, wherein a Criminal falls under the Sentence of his Righteous Judge.

Now, that the untimely death of Religious Princes is a penal stroke, needs no great *Demonstration*: two Considerations will sufficiently clear it.

First, *The greatness of such a Loss*: which is in some respects equal to the value of those Blessings we might expect from the continued Reign of Religious Princes; *David* made it an argument for Lamentation at the death of a wicked Prince; *Ye Daughters of Jerusalem, Weep over Saul, who clothed you with Scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of Gold upon your Apparel*, (2 Sam. 1. v. 24.) But these are the least and lowest of the advantages that might be hoped for under the auspicious Reign of a Pious Prince: 'Tis the scope of *Psal. 72.* to describe the Felicities of such
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a Golden Age. I know that Psalm is a *Typical Prophecy* of the glory of the Kingdom of the Messiah; but as there are some passages in it, that are not well capable of such an application; so most of the rest have literally a truth in them as expressive of the happy effects of the Government of wise and Godly *Princes*: and in these passages *David* has an immediate respect to the triumphant Reign of *Solomon*; whereof he had a prospect by revelation, and which was designed to be a type of the glorious & peaceable Kingdom of our Lord *Jesus*.

Now in that Psalm we find the *equal administration of Justice, regard to the Poor, relief to the Oppressed, numerous Blessings of Peace and Plenty to all*, assigned as the desirable advantages of such a Reign. Religious Princes are the Bulwark of their Subjects Liberty, the Glory & Stability of their Kingdoms: *For by a man of understanding and knowledge, the State shall be prolonged, (Pro. 28 v. 2.)* Under the wings of such a Government their people are at ease, and lifted upon high, they become great among the Nations & Princes among the Provinces. This was the condition of *Judah* under Religious Princes, whereas under Vicious and Idolatrous ones they were diminished, and brought low, and at last ruined; *For Righteousness exalts a Nation, but sin is the reproach of any People, (Pro. 14. v. 34)*

But to pass by all other advantages, Religious Governors are the most likely Instruments to reform a degenerate people; and accordingly we find, that as often as there were pious *Princes* in *Judah*, there was some appearance of a Reformation. In the Reign of *Joshua* we may justly suppose 'em most indispos'd; for as their ruin drew nearer, their guilt grew greater; and it was not without difficulty, and a resolute exercise of his authority that he prevail'd; for it is said he caused the people to stand to the Covenant of their God, and made all that were present in *Israel* to serve

serve the Lord, (2 Chron. 34. v. 32, 33.) Which seems to imply a backwardness on their part, and a resolved Zeal on his: And herein he had some success: For *all his days they departed not from following the Lord, their God*, as it follows there, tho the change was so forced, that it lasted no longer than his life. So that the influence of the *Authority, Examples and Encouragements* of Godly Magistrates may contribute very much to the National Reformation of their Subjects, and indeed such a National Turn is not in an ordinary way to be expected without them. And on this account the untimely death of Princes Zealous for Holiness & Reformation, is a greater loss than we are able to express, since a National returning to God is the highest blessing a sinful people can receive, or a godly Magistracy be instrumental to convey; for hereby they bring their people into good terms with their God, and engage his kind and indulgent Providence for them, which wou'd be a spring of all kind of mercies to them: the greatness of the loss argues it then to be a penal stroke, which nothing but Sin cou'd provoke God to inflict.

Secondly, *The awful significant portendency that is in the untimely death of Religious Princes, argues it to be a penal stroke.* But of this I shall speak but sparingly, because the voice of Providence may be easily mistaken by us, when we have not express directions from Scripture as an interpreter of it, yet I may venture to say two things concerning the signification of such a Providence, 1. *It is certainly Expressive of the wrath of God against a people whom he so rethukes.* Such a Rod has a loud voice, and speaks to us as in thunder, the Controversy of a displeased, provoked God. This is the language of such a Providence in the ears of natural Conscience, and I believe this truth has so many testimonies in the bosom of men, that I need not farther insist on it; for who is not ready to conclude, that certainly God is angry

with us, or he wou'd not have made such a grievous breach upon us?

2. *It is an indication of further and greater Judgments, on a supposal that a people continue impenitent under this; Lesser Judgments, when they are unsuccessful to recover us to Repentance (which was their first use) are not only Rods upon us, but Signs unto us that there are further Judgments and greater impendent over us. The Prophet tells us, (Isa. 57. v. 1.) That the Righteous perish, and no man lays it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, and none consider that the Righteous are taken away from the evil to come. If this be true of private persons that are sincerely pious and useful, how much more of Godly Princes, whose lives are of more publick concern, and influence: such Princes are a Bank to keep off the Torrent of Judgments while they live; but when they dye, they are taken away from the evil to come; yea, they are taken away that evil may come, there shall be no longer the influence of their Presence, or their Prayers, to prevent it. Thus it was with reference to Josiah's death, (2 Kings. 22. v. 20.) Behold therefore I will gather thee to thy Fathers; and thou shalt be gathered to thy Grave in Peace, and thine Eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place. And a few years after his death, the heavy Storm fell, that was so long threatned, and so much deserved by that obstinate and impenitent people.*

And now I proceed to improve this Truth, by applying it to our present case; and this I shall endeavour under two General Heads.

First, By way of Instruction: This Truth assigns the cause of that severe and humbling dispensation we are under by the death of our late Excellent Queen.

The Crown is in part fallen from our Head; Our glory is laid in the dust; A great Princess is this day slain in our Israel, one of the greatest that ever sat on the British Throne.

Throne, who added a greater *Lustre* to it than she received from it, since *Virtue* is of greater value than temporal *Grandure* or *Power*. I find not in Scripture-Story, a fitter parallel for her (if you allow for the disparity of the Sex) than this which my *Text* refers to: and therefore tho it have been excellently improved to this purpose already by my Reverend Brother, yet I shall not wholly decline the presenting it to your view again: But I shall content my self with brief hints, as *Gleanings* after an *Harvest*.

First then, These Crown'd Heads agree in their personal Qualifications; and (to omit many other particulars that were obvious in the Reign of both) I shall mention that only which is the truest Glory of reasonable creatures; they were both of them *sincerely eminently Religious*; *Josiah* was the wonder of his Age, and shining like a Star in the story of the Scriptures, and that of the first magnitude: for (2 Kings 23. v. 25.) *Like unto him was no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, &c. neither after him arose there any like him*: all the other good Kings of *Judah* have their Reign blemished by some observable and notorious failing: But the whole Reign and Life of this Excellent Prince is represented as an *Heaven without Clouds*. The sincerity of his Heart was the blessed Root of an exemplary and fruitful Life: for the Holy Ghost informs us, *That the King made a Covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his Commandments and Testimonies, and Statutes with all his heart, and with all his soul, &c.* (2 Chron. 34. v. 31.) And in pursuance of this obligation, he engaged in reforming work with all his might, with an heroic Princely Zeal, and an undaunted Resolution.

And now look on the reverse of the *Parallel*: and tho it be a great thing to be said of mortal creatures in this state of Imperfection, that they pass thro' the world without any noted blemish; and this is yet *greater* to be said of those that

that are encompassed with the Temptations that attend a *Crown*; yet this is but *little* to be said of our late *Queen*, whom some accounts (which we have no reason to distrust) have published to the World, as an exact *Master-piece* and *mirror* of Vertue, a *Princess* that had a deep sense of Religion upon her own soul, and was full of noble thoughts about *reforming* a sinful, *reconciling* a divided People. But it cannot be expected from such as had not the privilege of a near access, to enlarge on this Head: The world may challenge it as a due from those who can say more then what they receive by report from others; But on this account our loss is unexpressible, that we are bereaved of a *Queen*, whose exemplary piety *Inthron'd* her in the hearts of all her *well-inclined* Subjects.

Secondly, They agree in the season of their fall, which was untimely: In the Flower of their years, in the midst of their days, they both exchang'd the *Pomps* of a *Throne* for the *Solitude* of a *Grave*: K. *Josiah* at 39, and *Queen Mary* at 33. An age in which *David* deprecates death as a Judicial stroke, (Ps. 10. v. 2, 24.) *I said, oh my God, take me not away in the midst of my days*, Indeed whatever is judicial in it, belongs to the Subjects that are bereaved, not to the Princes that are removed, to whom tis no loss, but the highest gain, and happiest exchange, to put off a *Crown* of Gold, and put on a *Crown* of Glory: But ah how heavy a stroke is this on their unhappy, unworthy People, to have Princes of such extraordinary Qualifications, and excellent Hopes, so surprizingly snatch away!

Thirdly, They agree in the universal Lamentation that was made over them: We read not of any such mourning for any of the good Kings of *Judah*, as was for *Josiah*, which is expressive of his eminent worth, and the reverential love it procured him in the hearts of his people: Both *Jerusalem* and all *Judah* and *Jeremiah* join in these Lamentations, (2 Chron.

Chron. 35. v. 24, 25. 'Tis observed as a brand on the memory of Jehoram, *that he departed without being desired,* (*2 Chron. 21. v. 20.*) 'Tis the deserved infelicity of those that are useless or hurtful in their life, that they are not lamented at their Death. But the memory of the Just is Blessed, and their Dust is embalmed, by the undisssembled Tears of their sorrowful Subjects.

And how fully this part of the *Parallel* agrees to our present case, I need not shew, since your eyes, and ears, and habits are witnesses of it. Certainly never was Prince's snatcht away from a people, that more intirely, or more deservedly possessed their hearts! So that the Kingdoms are real Mourners.

Fourthly, We have reason to fear that there is too great an agreement in the circumstances of their people, with respect to the terms on which they stand with God. The sins of Judah were then full, and ripe for judgment; 'twas only the Life and Zeal of this Godly Prince that for a while reprieved his Kingdom, and retarded the fatal stroke.

And wou'd to God that the application of this instance to our case may not hold in this particular: I am sensible that it becomes us not to determine positively in a dubious case, especially when Sovereign and Prerogative Mercy may interpose above what God usually does, or what we have ground from Scripture to expect.

But yet I think this is undeniable, that we have so many grounds of rational fears, as shou'd excite us to the utmost diligence for preventing such a dreadful issue. Our Lands are full of Sin! many means have been tried for purging us without any considerable success; and now after divine Patience has waited for our fruitfulness in vain, this stroke looks like the breaking forth of a new Controversy; yea, like laying the Ax to the Root of the Tree: and if it shou'd prove so at last, ah unhappy people! For since we have not

been reformed, we may with trembling hearts expect; that if we be not wholly ruined, yet the floods of wrath will rise *higher* and the sword of vengeance pierce *deeper* than in our last visitation; for this increase of Judgments upon an unreformed people is agreeable to that rule which God lays down for his providential procedures, (*Levit. 26 Ch. throughout.*) Thus you see we have reason to say, *The Crown is fallen from our Head.* May we not therefore proceed.

Secondly, To infer that we have sinned, and with humbled hearts impute our suffering to our sins: you will find sufficient reason so to do, if you consider.

First, The dreadful guilt contracted in the late Reigns; In which it seem'd to be the great design of Hell, by obliterating a sense of all Religion to prepare the Lands for any.

As for Pollutions in Worship, I shall not descend into that invidious Argument, wherein the several Parties at variance are ready to charge each other with bitter Criminations, that lead rather to exasperate than heal; and tho' a modest defence of our selves against unrighteous accusations may be justified, yet under our present circumstances it becomes us all rather to fall with humility under that exhortation, (*2.Chron. 28. v. 10.*) *Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?*

But as to *Immoralities in Practice,* they have been too visible to be denied; as well as too heinous to be excused; the time would fail me to enumerate all the abominations of those days, by which the foundation of God's Controversy against us was laid. How was Idolatry countenanced? the sacred name of God contemned; by Perjurys in insuring Oaths, and by Hellish Affronts of that Glorious Being in profaneness? How general was the Profanation of the Sabbath? what unreasonable Severities against a Laborious, Faithful

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Ministry, and Peaceable People? What a Sea of Blood shed both by barbarous Butcheries without form of Law, and the palliation of Murders under a notion of Man-slaughter, which the Law of God is a stranger to; whereby the guilt of Blood has been unpurged. What abominable Uncleanliness, Luxury, and Intemperance, that from a polluted Fountain spread thro the Lands like a Deluge? And indeed what Sin is there marked out in Scripture, as having a Land-destroying influence, the guilt whereof was not then found in our Skirts? So that we may justly account, that while God is visiting now, he is calling to remembrance the guilt that was contracted then. The Jews had a *Pro-verbial Speech*, that in all their afflictions there was an ounce of the *Golden Calf*; intimating God's displeasure against their Idolatry; and in all the Judgments that may overtake us, we may as truly conclude that God is punishing the Lands for that former guilt: To which I may add,

Secondly, That we continue an unreformed people still. In some Instances (blessed be God) there is an hopeful change; Insinuating Oaths are abrogated, Penal Laws against Peaceable Dissenters Repealed. But alas! our abominations in practice are still continued; so that we must be silent under the Expostulation of God by the Prophet: *How canst thou say, I am not polluted, &c?* (*Jer. 2. v. 35.*) Under our circumstances, 'twould be a great aggravation of our guilt to deny it, and that which wou'd provoke the Holy God to visit us so much the more severely: *Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me: Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest I have not sinned,* (*Jer. 2. v. 25.*) Let us therefore consider the present heavy stroke as a fruit of Sin, and humbly acknowledge that we have procured these things to our selves.

2d Use. Let us improve this Truth by way of Exhortation in these Particulars:

First, Since the untimely death of Excellent Princes is a fruit of their People's Sins, let us adore the holy and Righteous hand of God in the breath he has made upon us. The Great God expects our lowest submission in all his rebukes for Sin: and that we shou'd be sensible of the evils we have done in his sight, that so he might be justified when he speaks, and clear when he Judges, (Psal. 51. ver. 4.) How severely soever he Afflicts, tis no more than we deserve, and there is no ground for a repining complaint left us, while there is no wrong done us, and we reap only the fruit of our own wretched doings. It becomes us therefore to prostrate our selves before our offended God with the deepest veneration and awe, and to entertain honourable adoring thoughts of his spotless Purity, and Righteous Government, whilst we mourn and smart under the blow of his Displeased hand; Let our souls be under practical convictions that the Lord our God is Holy, even when he makes us unhappy.

Secondly, Let us thankfully observe and acknowledge a mixture of great Indulgence and unmerited goodness with this rebuke. Since it is for sin that it is come upon us, we have ground for wonder and praise, that he smote us no sooner, nor more severely.

That he smote us no sooner; for our guilt has long solicited his Justice against us. There is great mercy in it that our Queen was spared, till her interest and influence were made so serviceable both in beginning and confirming the late merciful Revolution: this fruit at least we reap from the continuance of that precious life so long.

That he smote us no more severely. The same Righteous and provoked hand that snatched away our Queen, might have bereaved us of our King too, and so have abandon'd us

to all the calamities and confusions which such an unthankful people deserve.

But I do not beg our God that herein our circumstances vastly differ from those of Judah at the fall of their *Josiah*; for there was never a good Prince left to sustain that tottering State; the Three that succeeded *Josiah* before the Captivity were all wicked, and served only to help forward the judgments that were hastening on that people. But thro' the merciful Providence of God, we have a King yet spared to us, who is indeed as the Breath of our Nostrils; and the Anointed of the Lord; of whom we may hope to say, that under his Shadow we shall live among the Heathen; (Lament. 4. v. 20.) Let therefore a sense of our misery keep an equal pace with lamentation for our loss; that we may ascribe unto God the Glory of his Justice and his Goodness both together.

Thirdly, Let us be excited to an holy revenge upon Sin, that has done us this mischief. Had so admired beloved a Princess slain by any treacherous and bloody hand, oh what thoughts of exemplary Vengeance would have filled every loyal breast! What indignation against the Monster that could attempt such an horrid Villany; touch such a sacred Life? My Brethren, the Traitor is in our Bosoms; wou'd you then meditate a noble Revenge? Oh be perswaded to do exemplary Execution on your Lusts. Let then salt is a sacrifice to your just resentments; and in this kind of Revenge, 'tis your commendation and interest to be implacable, and inexorable: Oh then; Pluck out Right Eyes, Cut off Right Hands, Do violence to the Body of Death, and let not your Souls pity, nor your Eye spare!

Let a sense of our loss awaken in us a penitent sense of our Sins, that may issue in a deeper hatred of them, and firmer resolves, thro' the strength of Christ, against them. And because this is the proper work of the Day, I shall

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lay it open before you, and press it upon you in a few *Particulars*.

Your work then in this holy revenge upon Sin, lies in three things:

First, Searching after it, that the Traytor may be found that has done this deed. *Let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord, (Lam. 3. v. 40.)* Let every one of us imagine what it is in us that has provoked God thus to smite us: for as the punishment is general, so is the guilt that has procured it. Let Conscience then impartially enquire, wherein you have added to the stock of *national guilt*, and contributed to fill God's *Ephes*; and if your Consciences be awakened and enlighten'd, they will readily answer the solemn Enquiry, *What have I done?* I shall not descend into particulars, but refer you to that Monitor in your own Bosoms, and indeed this part of the work is fittest to be done in secret.

Secondly, Mourning over Sin. Our loss indeed calls for our lamentation; but our chiefest sorrow shou'd be reserved for our Sins; we shou'd mourn over the Sins others, but especially over our own.

We shou'd mourn over the Sins of others: looking on our selves as parts of the great *Collective Body*; and under that notion, let us take a view of the provoking circumstances of these guilty Lands with broken and bleeding hearts. Ah our ingratitude, that we are no more affected with our mercies! Ah our impenitency, that we are so insensible of our Sins! How wretched is the posture of our hearts, disaffected towards the Great God, as our holy Law-giver, and chiefest Good? How hath he smitten us, but we have not grieved! How has he saved us, but we have not feared the Lord and his Goodness! Instead of meditating grateful returns, how have we repeated our Affronts, and grown visibly worse under the means that shou'd have made

made us better ! Ah *sinful Nation ! A people laden with Iniquity* : for these things our bowels shou'd with the Prophet's, *sound like an Harp, and our hearts be poured forth like water before the Lord.*

2. We shou'd especially bewail our own Sins. And here it is that the Floodgate of Sorrow shou'd be opened, and the Springs of Repentance broken up. Our mourning for Sin shou'd be deep, like their's for *Josiah*, (*Zech. 12.*) It shou'd be *Ingenuous* and *Evangelical*, not the howling of a *Criminal* that is afraid of being punished, but the remorse of a *Child* that is sorry to have offended.

Thirdly, Mortifying *suppress* Sin in our selves, and *suppressing* it in others as far as we are able. 'Tis the guise of Hypocrites to mourn for Sin, and live in it ; the light of Conscience gives 'em some remorse for Sin, while a debased heart finds greater delight in it. Let it not be so with you : But let your *Lamentation* over it issue in a greater *desestation* of it, and *fixed aversation* against it. Do not content your selves with restraining Sin, but labour to mortify it : Furnish your minds with such motives as may thro' the operation of the *Sanctifying Spirit*, deaden your hearts to Sin.

And labour also to *suppress* it in others as far as your Example, Authority Interest or Perswasions can extend ; That so God and Men may see that such a costly Rod is not spent upon us in vain.

Now to excite you to this holy *Revenge* against Sin, I shall offer these *Considerations*, and conclude with them.

First, Consider, that if this stroke be not thus improved, 'tis not the last, nor the greatest that we shall feel. The armory of God's wrath is not yet empty, his Quiver is full of Arrows ; The instruments of death are in his hand, he has ways enough in view to increase the Calamitys of a sinful people that are *hardned*, when he discovers, himself to be *offended* : And indeed on this account our circumstances are
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very critical, and our carriage under them will give us a rule, by which we may judge, what God will further do unto us: For if we continue to walk contrary to him, and refuse to be reformed by these things, he will walk contrary to us, and punish us yet seven times more for our Sins; and not cease from smiting till he has made us leave sinning, or laid us wait for it. Let us remember therefore, that the invaluable life of our King is in the hand of that God, whom his Subjects so regardlessly affront; a life of the greatest importance, and made yet of greater, by our present loss; 'Tis a singular honour God has put upon the King, that the great affairs of the world roll and turn upon so frail a life: But of how much the greater value it is, so much the more is it our interest and shoud be our care to preserve it, and we cannot contribute to its preservation more effectually, than by this method of *Repentance*. We have sinned our Excellent Queen into the grave already; our hopes from her are all vanished, and is it not yet enough? Shall we provoke God by our Sins to repeat his stroke, and throw us into utter Confusion? If we wou'd prevent so sad an issue, this is the only expedient.

Secondly, If this frown from Heaven awaken us to Repentance, our sin shall not yet be our ruin; For the door of mercy is never shut against a repenting people. The Decree brings not forth, till the Springs of Repentance are dried up. Repentance is not hid from God's Eyes till it be hid from ours. If God be pleased thus to seal up instruction by this correction; It will turn our loss into the greatest gain. For when once a people are prepared for mercy, God can easily preserve Instruments by whom he will convey it, or raise up others, altho all that we now have in view, were laid in their silent Graves; for the hope of God's Israel must not be built on mortal creatures, but on the God of Israel, (Ps. 146. v. 3.) *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of man, in whom*

whom is no help, his breath goeth forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God:

Lastly, Remember that a nobler life than that of mortal Princes has fallen a Sacrifice for Sin, even that of the Son of God; He died for our Sins; For the iniquity of his People was he stricken, (Isa. 53. v. 8.) In that stupendous transaction, the demerit and malignity of Sin is most awfully represented. The honour of Justice required no less an expiation; that so pardoned sinners might have no occasion to entertain dishonourable thoughts of God, or look upon sin with any diminution of its hatefulness. And it is by thoughts of Faith exercised on the death of the Son of God, that we shou'd be chiefly excited to an holy hatred of Sin, and indignation against it. Who can consider the great Redeemer struggling, bleeding, dying under the punishment of Sin, and indulge it with complacency and delight any more? How detestable shou'd it be to us in Repenting for it, since it was so bitter to our Lord Jesus in expiating of it? Oh then let all these Considerations have a powerful impression on our hearts, and form them to a real dislike of Sin, and divorce from it. Let us ingage with an holy fervency in the work of this day, and bind our souls under the most solemn Obligations against Sin, that we may proclaim and pursue a mortal enmity to it, and have no peace with any lust any more. Let us deal with it as our Enemy, and in this frame God will be our Friend; and if he be for us, the most cloudy dispensations will have a friendly aspect and influence upon us. For all Creatures, all Providences will be at Peace with them who are at Peace with God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.